

Message Text

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ACTION VO-03

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-12 ADP-00 INSE-00 CIAE-00 FBIE-00

NSAE-00 SR-02 ORM-03 /046 W
----- 112751

R 041800 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8532
INFO USMISSION GENEVA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY ROME

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E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: CVIS, UR, US, SREF

SUBJECT: FURTHER INCREASE IN SOVIET EMIGRATION TO US

ROME FOR INS

REF: MOSCOW 2517 (NOTAL) AND 0144

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: EMBASSY MOSCOW IMMIGRATION PROCESSING HAS INCREASED 60 PER CENT THIS YEAR COMPARED TO FIRST QUARTER OF 1972. THIS INCREASE IN IMMIGRATION WORKLOAD FOLLOWS 1971-72 INCREASE OF 74 PER CENT. WHEREAS LAST YEAR'S INCREASE WAS ATTRIBUTABLE TO JAN. 1972

INITIATION OF THIRD COUNTRY PROCESSING PROGRAM, LATEST STEP UP APPEARS TO BE BASED AT LEAST IN PART ON MORE LIBERAL SOVIET EXIT VISA POLICY. EMBASSY NIV ISSUANCES ALSO UP SIGNIFICANTLY IN JFIRST QUARTER 1973.

JEWS AND AMRENIANS CONSTITUTE OVERSHELMING MAJORITY OF IMMIGRANTS TO US, WHILE PRIVATE NIV BREAKDOWN IS BALANCED AMONG SEVERAL GROUPS.

END SUMMARY.

2. EMBASSY MOSCOW PROCESSED TOTAL 191 IMMIGRANTS IN FIRST FOUR MONTHS CY 1973, REPRESENTING APPROXIMATELY 60 PER CENT INCREASE OVER WORKLOAD IN FIRST QUARTER 1972. 126 OF THE 191 IMMIGRANTS

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(66 PER CENT) WERE ISSUED PRO FORMA VISAS FOR THIRD COUNTRY PROCESSING (TCP) BY INS/ ROME, WHILE 65 WERE ISSUED IMMIGRANT VISAS IN MOSCOW. (OF THE 120 IMMIGRANT SPROCESSED IN FIRST QUARTER 1972, 64 WERE ISSUED IV'S WHILE 56 RECEIVED PRO FORMA VISAS FOR TCP PROCESSING.) ACTUAL NUMBER OF PERSONS PROCEEDING US VIA ITALY SUBSTANTIALLY HIGHER THAN FIGURE OF 126 PRO FORMA ISSUANCES, HOWEVER, AS LARGE NUMBER OF IV RECIPIENTS CACCOMPANIED OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS TO ROME.

3. INCREASE OF 60 PER CENT IN IV WORKLOAD IN FIRST QUARTER 1973 FOLLOWS 74 PER CENT INCREASE RECORDED FROM 1971 TO 1972 (FORM 288 TO 500 PERSONS PROCESSED). WHEREAS 1971-72 INCREASE WAS ATTRIBUTABLE TO INCREASED FLEXIBILITY OF USG PROCEDURES REPRESENTED BY INITIATION OF TCP IN JANUARY 1972 (SEE MOSCOW 0144), ADDITIONAL INCREASE IN 1973 APPEARS TO BE BASED AT LEAST IN PART ON MORE FORTHCOMING SOVIET EXIT VISA POLICY. SOVIET ISSUANCE OF EXIT PERMISSION IN US IMMIGRATION CASES (BOTH REP. LIST AND OTHERS) APPEARS TO HAVE QUICKENED IN PACE THIS YEAR, PARTICULARLY DURING PAST FEW WEEKS. COMMENT: EMBASSY CONSIDERS THAT IF WE CONTINUE TO STRESS TO SOVIET OFFICIALS IN BOTH MOSCOW AND WASHINGTON IMPORTANCE WHICH USG, CONGRESS AND AMERICAN PUBLIC ATTACH TO QUESTION OF FAMILY REUNIFICATION, SOVIET GOVT. IN PERIOD PRECEDING AND FOLLOWING BREZHNEV US VISIT WILL LIKELY STEP UP FURTHER THE PACE OF EXIT ISSUANCE TO US. RESULTING RESOLUTION OF LARGE NUMBER OF OUR EXIT VISA CASES WOULD GO FAR TO ELIMINATE LONG- STANDING WEAK POINT IN OTHERWISE IMPROVED US- SOVIET RELATIONS AND WOULD CONTRIBUTE ITS SHARE TO ATMOSPHERE OF DETENTS. END COMMENT.

4. FIRST FOUR MONTHS OF 1973 ALSO BROUGHT 34 PER CENT INCREASE IN EMBASSY NON- IMMIGRANT VISA (NIV) ISSUANCES FROM FIRST QUARTER 1972 TOTAL OF 1,404 TO TOTAL THUS FAR THIS YEAR OF 1,884. THIS, TOO, REPRESENTS RATE OF INCREASE SIMILAR TO THAT RECORDED FROM 1971 TO 1972. BULK OF INCREASE HAS BEEN IN ISSUCANE OF MFA- SPONSORED OFFICIAL VISAS (SOVIET DIPLOMATS, BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVES, EXCHANGES, ETC.), AS PRIVATE NIV'S SHOWED ONLY MODEST INCREASE FROM 210 IN FIRST QUARTER 1972 TO 225 IN FIRST QUARTER THIS YEAR. GIVEN FACT THAT PEAK TRAFFIC IN PRIVATE VISITORS OCCURS DURING SUMMER AND AUTUMN, IT IS NONETHELESS LIKELY THAT PRIVATE NIV ISSUACNES IN 1973 WILL EXCEED 1972 TOTAL OF 969 AND POSSIBLY EXCEED EMBASSY MOSCOW ALL- TIME HIGH OF 1,101 ISSUCANCES, IN 1969. (1970 AND 1971 PRIVATE NIV ISSUANCES WERE 1,087 AND 1,015, RESPECTIVELY; LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PRE-1969 ISSUANCES WERE CONSIDERABLY LOWER.)

5. NATIONALITY BREAKDOWN: 129 OF THE 191 IMMIGRANTS (68 PER CENT) PROCESSED IN FIRST QUARTER 1973 WERE JEWISH, WHILE 47 (25 PERCENT) WERE ARMENIAN. OTHERS WERE 6 RUSSIAN, 3 GREEK (STATELESS

RESIDENTS

OF USSR), 2 LITHUANIAN, 2 GERMAN, 1 ESTONIAN, AND 1 UKRAINIAN.
(JEWS AND ARMENIANS ALSO CONSTITUTED OVERWELMING MAJORITY, 71 AND
16 PER CENT, RESPECTIVELY, OF IMMIGRANTS PROCESSED IN 1972.)
PRIVATE NIV BREAKDOWN SHOWS CONSIDERABLY GREATER BALANCE: 62 JEWS
(28 PER CENT), 58 UKRAINIANS (26), 37 RUSSIANS (16), 23 ARMENIANS
(10). ALSO RECEIVING NIV'S WERE 16 ESTONIANS, 10 LATVIANS,
8 BELORUSSIANS, 6 LITHUANIANS, AND ONE EACH OF FOLLOWING SOVIET
NATIONALITIES: ASSYRIAN, GERMAN, HUNGARIAN, KABARDINIAN,
MACEDONIAN.

6. FYI: GENERAL OUTLINE OF INCREASE IN VISA ISSUANCES PROVIDED
UPON REQUEST MYA 4 TO NEWSWEEK MOSCOW CORRESPONDENT AXELBANK,
WHO IS PREPARING ARTICLE ON VARIOUS ASPECTS OF IMPROVED US-
SOVIET RELATIONS. NATIONALITY BREAKDOWN NOT RPT NOT GIVEN,
OTHER THAN STATEMENT THAT JEWS AND ARMENIANS CONSTITUTE TWO
ALRGEST GROUPS AMONG IMMIGRANTS.

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SREF
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 MAY 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: thigpegh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973MOSCOW05052
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: n/a
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730536/aaaahuxd.tel
Line Count: 135
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION VO
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: thigpegh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 SEP 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <13-Sep-2001 by shawdg>; APPROVED <16-Nov-2001 by thigpegh>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> mcm 971204
Subject: FURTHER INCREASE IN SOVIET EMIGRATION TO US
TAGS: CVIS, UR, US
To: GENEVA
ROME
SECSTATE WASHDC
USUN NEW YORK
VO
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

